

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia/Ethiopia

SUBJECT Construction of Ammunition Plant
in Ethiopia

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. The Czechoslovak government negotiated a contract in 1948 with Ethiopia to plan and supply equipment for an ammunition plant which will produce 100,000 rounds of 7.92 mm ammunition a day. Construction of the plant is to be supervised by Czech engineers, and Czech specialists are to be sent to Ethiopia to get production started and train natives in mass production methods.
2. No definite date has been set for the beginning of construction, but the engineer in charge, Architect (fnu) Kukan, was scheduled to leave Czechoslovakia in May 1949. Payments for machines and services are to be made in dollars and the entire project is to be handled by the Povazske Strojarne. Actual construction work will be done by native laborers paid by the Ethiopian government, but will be under the supervision of Kukan.
3. The contract calls for a complete plant which will be capable of producing and assembling all the component parts of the bullets. This will range from the casting of crude cartridge casings to the manufacture of fuses and detonators. Testing instruments are to be produced in the plant and used on the finished cartridges, and a test firing range is to be constructed near the factory.
4. Experts familiar with every phase of production are to be sent to Ethiopia under the supervision of Mr. (fnu) Skorplik, deputy manager of the ammunition branch of the Povazske Strojarne, who will be appointed production manager. Overseeing the shipment of the machinery from the Ethiopian port to point of destination will be Mr. (fnu) Vochta, an employee of the Bratislava-Petrzalka (P49/X99) branch of the Povazske Strojarne, who will also act in a liaison capacity with the Ethiopian authorities.
5. Before shipment the machinery is being assembled at the Povazska Bystrica plant under the direction of Mr. (fnu) Peske, a former technical clerk of the ammunition plant who has been appointed chief supervisor of technical preparations for the Ethiopian project.

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6. For the most part, used machinery, part of the reserve at the Povazska Bystrica plant, will be shipped because new machines are not available. Only some tubs and electric furnaces are to be new, the latter being imported from abroad.
7. All material is to be ready for shipment by the last quarter of 1949, at which time the production experts will leave for Ethiopia.

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Comment: With the exception of the above listed personnel who are technically qualified for their jobs, all the other experts have been chosen for political reliability. These chosen are not enthusiastic about their prospective venture and complain about the climate of Ethiopia and the length of time they will be separated from their families. In addition there is a possibility that some of them will not be able to get passports, as objections against their leaving the country may be raised by both the Ministry of the Interior, and the Slovak Commissariats of Interior and Industry.

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